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April 24, 2002

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Marlene H. Dortch, Esquire
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
The Portals
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

**Re: Notification of Ex Parte Communication
MM Docket Nos. 01-235 and 96-197**

Dear Marlene:

This is to advise you, in accordance with Section 1.1206 of the FCC's rules, that on April 22, 2002, the representatives of Media General listed on Attachment A hosted the individuals from the Commission listed on Attachment B for a tour and meeting at "The News Center," Media General's facilities in Tampa, Florida. "The News Center" combines under one roof many of the operations of Media General's co-owned television station, WFLA-TV; its newspaper, The Tampa Tribune; and its local website, TBO.com.

The session began with brief introductions of the participants and then a tour of the television station's studio, news room, principal news control room, and master control; the newspaper's archives and research department, photography department, newsroom, and editorial department; the "Multimedia Desk"; and the facilities' administrative offices. "The Multimedia Desk" is one large circular area where employees of the television station, the newspaper, and the website sit in close proximity to each other, so they can communicate about breaking local news stories and coordinate the development of news reports in a way that will best meet the community's needs.

Following the tour of the facilities, Media General displayed a power-point presentation, a copy of which is attached. Missing from the attachment are several video clips that were interspersed in the presentation. The video clips showed television coverage of a fire in Ybor City, Florida, and problems in the computer system used by a local sheriff to track drunk drivers.

Following the power-point presentation, Dr James K. Gentry, Dean of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications at the University of Kansas, reported on his work with

Media General in establishing "The News Center" and his expertise in helping to meld the varying cultures of print, broadcast, and online journalism. He then reviewed the operational benefits of convergence, such as shared use of the newspaper's extensive archives, and described the enhancement in news and public service initiatives that result from convergence. Dean Gentry also explained that convergence is best achieved through common ownership because only with common ownership do such projects have sufficiently focused leadership that is willing to take risks for the common good. He concluded by discussing journalism departments around the country that are teaching convergence and provided the attached hand-out concerning the initiation of a new convergence curriculum for journalism students at the University of Southern California.

Reed Ashe then briefly reviewed Media General's television and newspaper holdings and discussed Media General's efforts in developing convergence in five other markets -- the Roanoke-Lynchburg, Virginia, DMA; The Tri-Cities, Tennessee/Virginia, DMA; the Florence-Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, DMA; the Columbus, Georgia, DMA; and the Panama City, Florida, DMA -- and highlighted the higher quality of journalism Media General is now able to deliver in those markets.

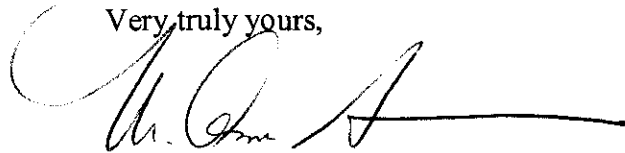
In brief remarks, George Mahoney then stated that the current regulatory system is "broken," and repeal of the newspaper/broadcast cross-ownership rule will allow the marketplace to function in a manner that will supply better and more local news. Without such reform, localism is jeopardized. While Media General's common ownership of newspaper and broadcast outlets in Tampa is grandfathered, its other convergence operations are not, and prompt repeal is important to allow these situations to grow and foster beyond the next television license renewal cycle.

During a question-and-answer session, the participants discussed the availability of media "voices" in smaller communities; the competition that Media General is facing from larger companies that deliver non-local news; the cancellation or termination of local newscasts in a number of markets; the fact that, although convergence creates efficiencies in the delivery of news, Media General does not save money through convergence but instead gains the ability to produce a better news product that helps it compete more effectively with larger national media players; the fact that there are multiple daily newspapers in most DMA's with which various television stations could converge as well as many weekly newspapers that could be converted to daily newspapers; and the difficulties Media General has experienced in attempting convergence without common ownership.

Marlene H. Dortch, Esquire
April 24, 2002
Page 3

As required by section 1.1206(b), two copies of this letter are being submitted for each of the above-referenced dockets.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Anne Swanson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

M. Anne Swanson

Enclosures

cc w/encls. by hand delivery:

Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin J. Martin
Susan Eid, Esquire
Stacy Robinson, Esquire
Catherine Bohigian, Esquire
Ms. Emily Willeford
Paul Gallant, Esquire

Attachment A — Media General Representatives

O. Reed Ashe, Jr.
President and Chief Operating Officer, Media General

John Zimmerman
Vice President, Media General, and President, Broadcast Division

Daniel Bradley
Vice President, News, Broadcast Division

Ardell Hill
Chief Engineer, Broadcast Division

George L. Mahoney
General Counsel and Secretary, Media General

Eric S. Land
President and General Manager, WFLA-TV

Forrest L. Carr
News Director, WFLA-TV

Joseph Pomilla
General Sales Manager, WFLA-TV

Brad Moses
Marketing Director, WFLA-TV

Donna Reed
Managing Editor, *The Tampa Tribune*

Bruce Faulmann
Advertising Director, Florida Publishing Group

Bruce Potter
Director, News Synergy, Publishing Division

Kirk Read
General Manager, TBO.com

Dr. James K. Gentry
Dean, School of Journalism and Mass Communications, University of Kansas

Robert Hynes
Collings, Swift & Hynes

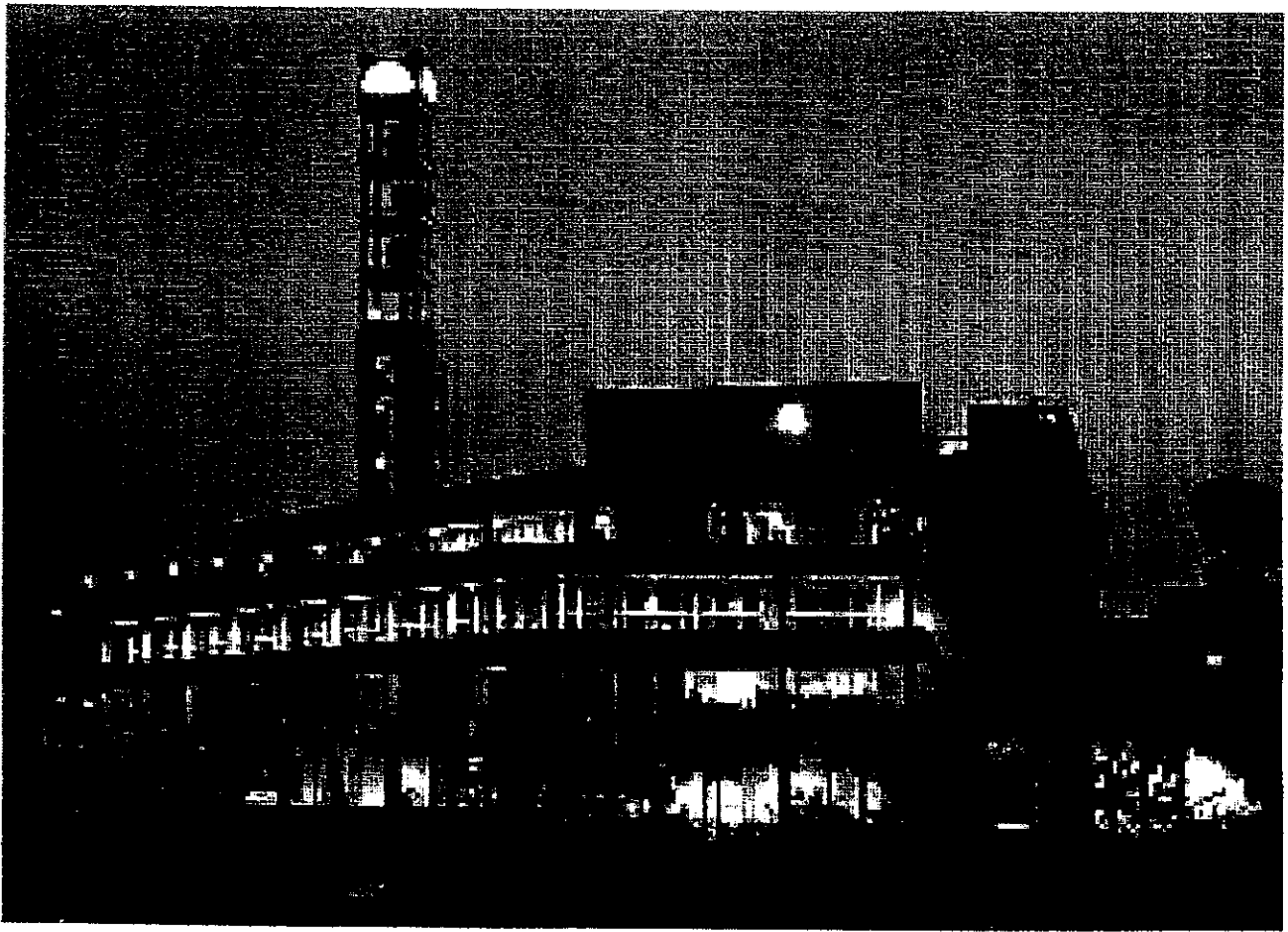
M. Anne Swanson
Dow, Lohnes & Albertson, PLLC

Attachment B — FCC Participants

Commissioner Kathleen Q. Abernathy
Commissioner Kevin J. Martin
Susan Ed, Esquire
Stacy Robinson, Esquire
Catherine Bohigian Esquire
Ms. Emily Willeford
Paul Gallant, Esquire

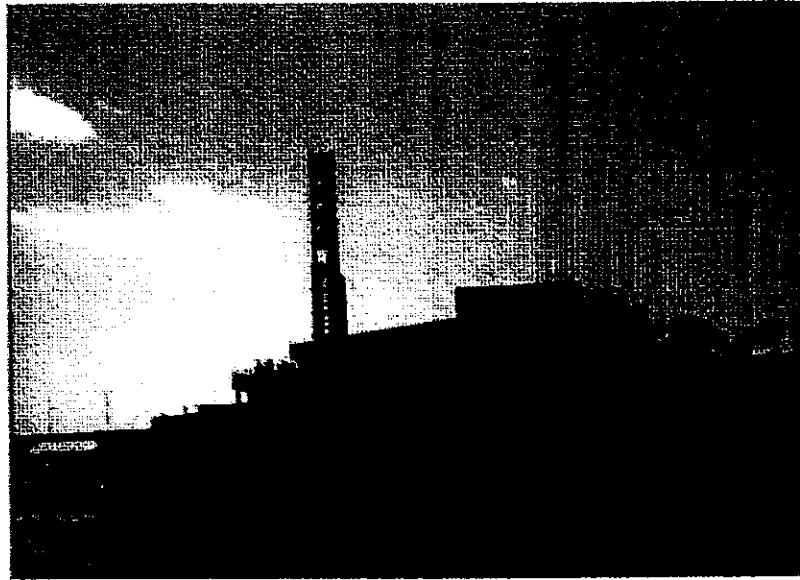
The News Center

Seven Levels of News Convergence



What is the News Center?

- The News Center combines *The Tampa Tribune*, WFLA-TV and TBO.com news operations in one building
- It was the first combination in the U.S.A. to converge a major newspaper, a broadcast TV news operation and an on-line service



Convergence Means Cooperation

- The "Multimedia Desk" coordinates incoming information
- Some critics and scholars have misreported its role
- There is no "central command" -- any cooperation is strictly voluntary
- It's convergence, not a merger



Why Converge?

- Convergence brings strength in numbers
- Combined resources allow us to do a better job for our readers, users and viewers
- A pending News Center innovation will allow us to strengthen our ties to citizens
- Our boss ordered it!

THE TAMPA TRIBUNE



the Seven Key Areas for Success

- Daily reporting
- Spot news
- Photography
- Enterprise reporting
- Franchises
- Events
- Public affairs



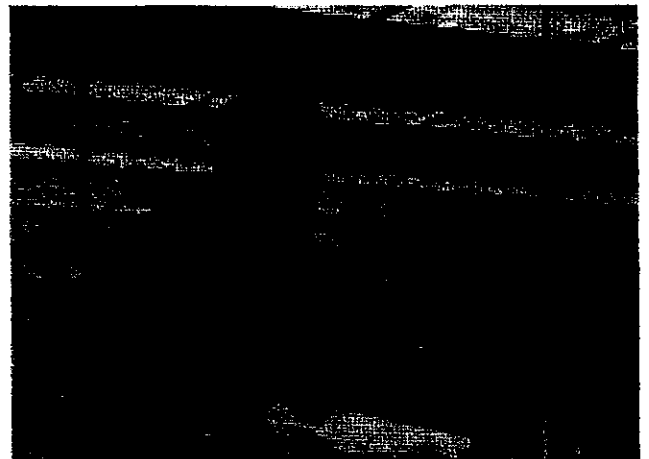
aily Reporting

- Reporters and editors share tips daily across platforms
- Each partner makes its story budgets available to the other through a central database we call "BudgetBank"
- Most editorial meetings have at least one representative from another platform



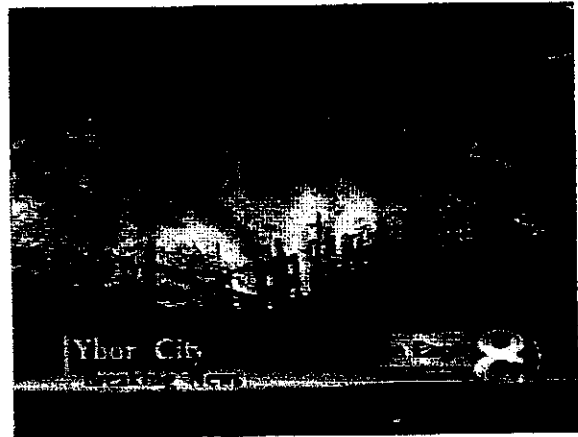
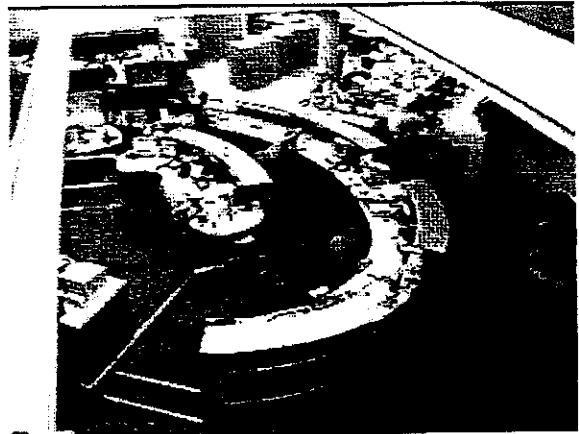
aily Reporting

- WFLA Executive Producer of Content and Convergence Susan DeFraties attends at least two converged editorial meetings per day
- Assistant Multimedia editor Ken Knight attends most editorial meetings
- This makes it far less likely that any partner will miss a story



Spot News Reporting

- Our multi-media desk is a clearing house for handling incoming information, informing each partner of crew assignments and handling requests for cross-platform assistance
- The News Center can flood the field with resources, thereby providing better and more thorough coverage for the community



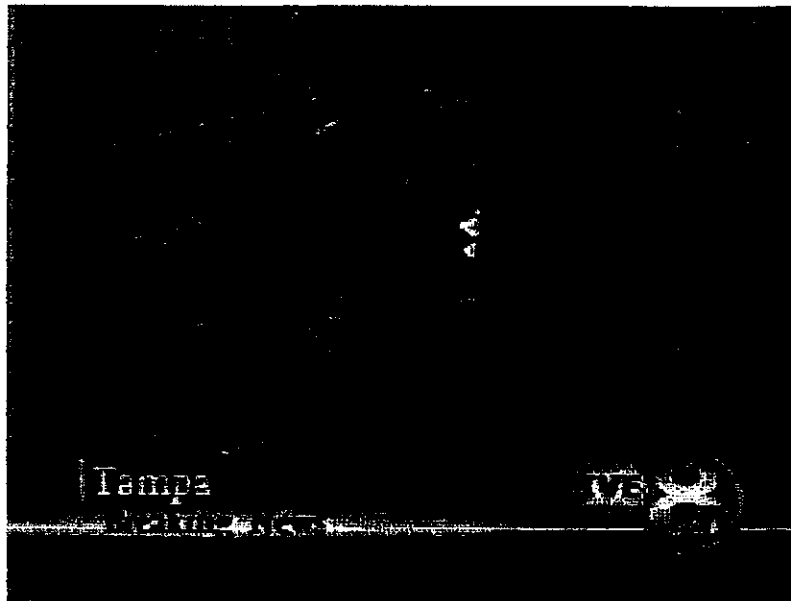
Spot News

- The *Trib's* archive and research desk gives quick access to vital information
- TBO.com's breaking news page gives users instant access to information as it comes in



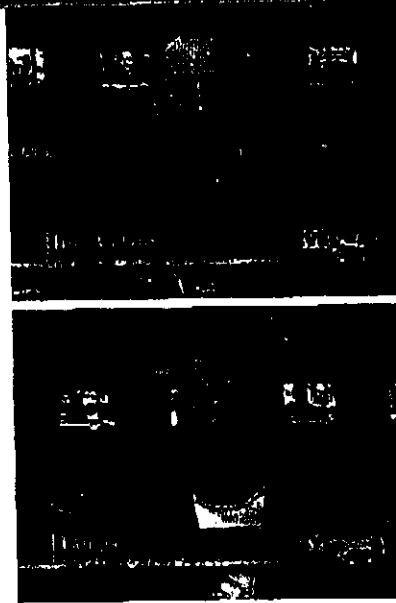
Spot News Example #1

- When a disturbed teen crashed a small plane into a Tampa Bank building, WFLA went on the air immediately
- *The Tampa Tribune* research desk quickly helped us trace the plane's tail number



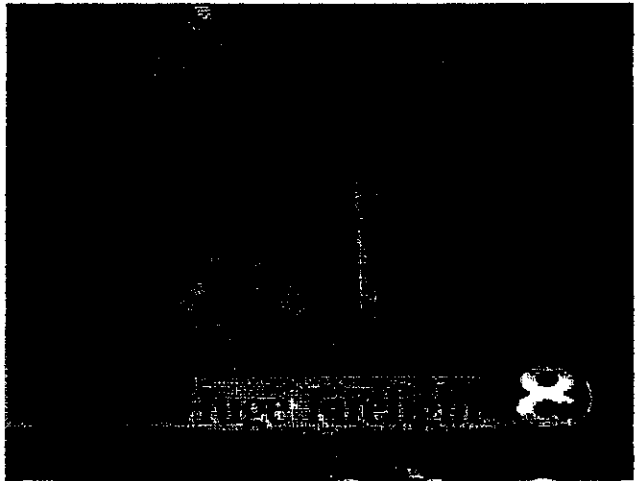
Spot News Example #1

- TBO.com writer Jim Collins witnessed the crash and went live on WFLA-TV
- *Tampa Tribune* writer Dave Simanoff went live with details of the building layout and tenants



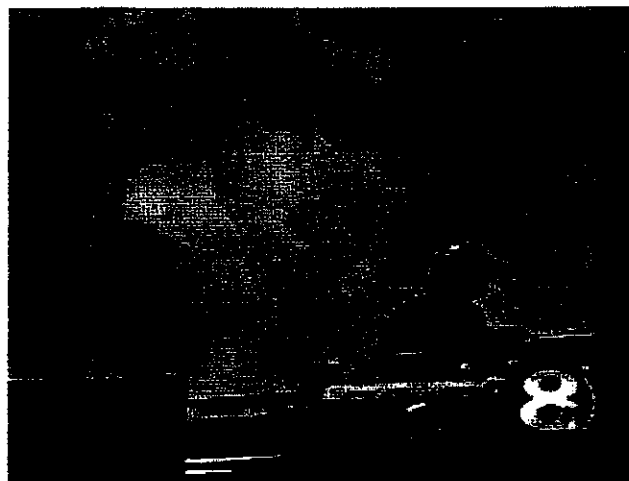
Spot News Example #2

- An entire city block of Ybor City, a prime tourist destination for Tampa, caught fire
- WFLA-TV immediately went live with continuing coverage



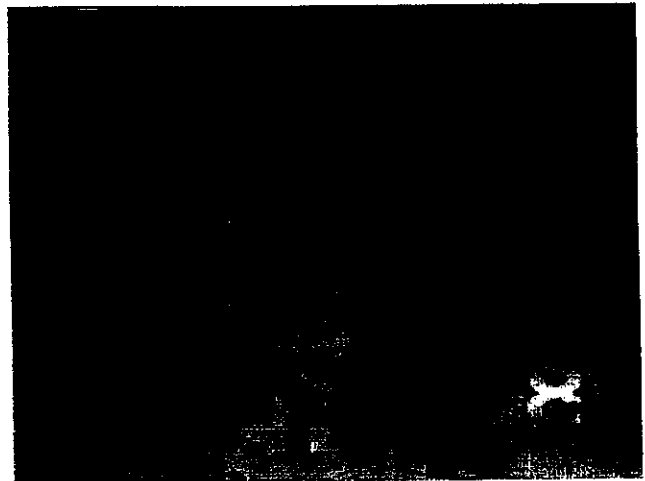
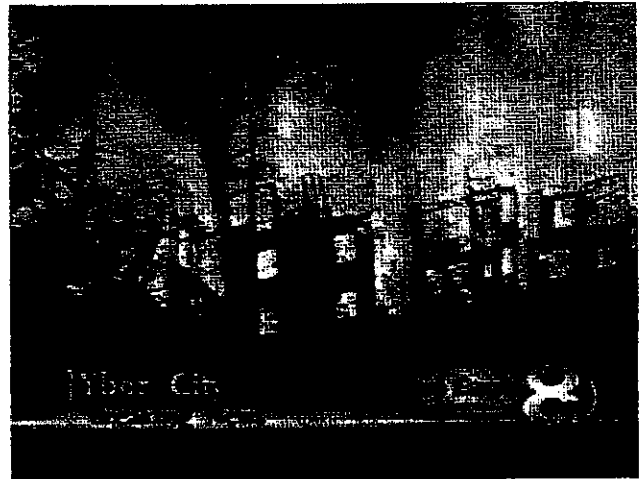
Spot News Example #2

- Within minutes, the *Tampa Tribune's* archive desk was able to identify the owner of the property, information WFLA-TV quickly relayed to viewers

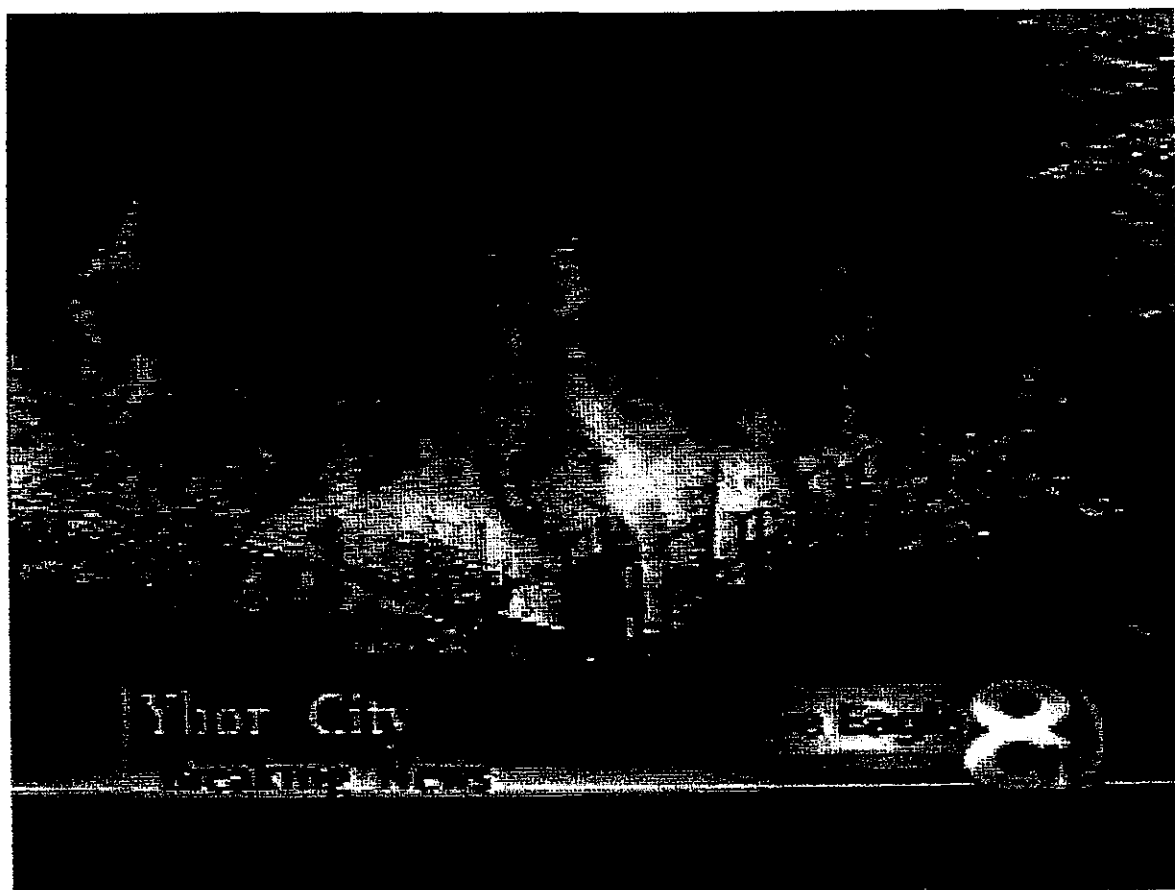


Spot News Example #2

- WFLA-TV's live reporting team included not only its usual complement of TV reporters, but also nearly half a dozen reporters and photographers from the *Tampa Tribune* and from TBO.com



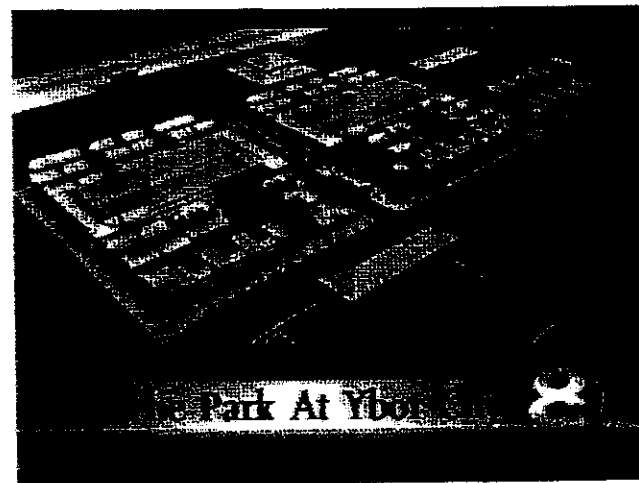
oot News Example #2



Contains excerpt from *The News Hour with Jim Lehrer*

Spot News Example #2

- Tampa Tribune business editor Dave Simanoff researched information the *Trib* had on hand about the property
- He was able to go on air quickly with details about plans for the property and how the fire might effect the Tampa economy



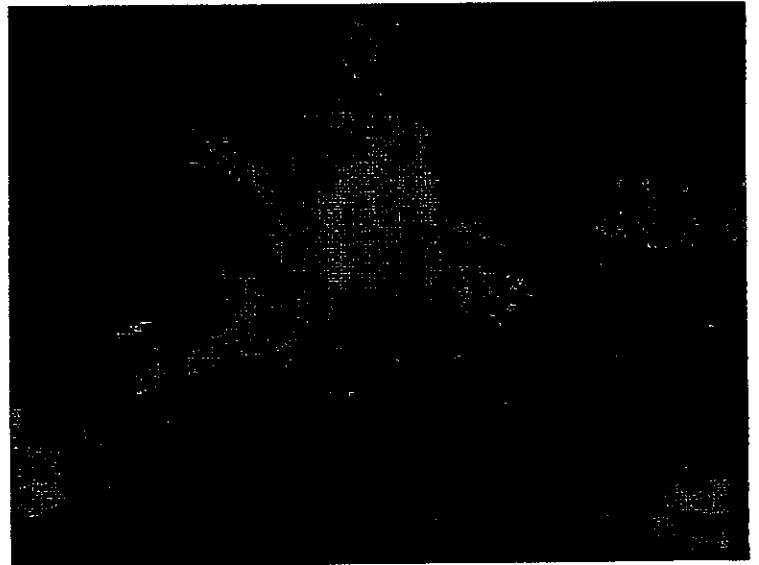
oot News Example #2

- TV news in particular is often criticized for cursory, surface level coverage, *especially* when reporting breaking news
- Through convergence, *The Tampa Tribune, WFLA-TV and TBO.com* were able to *immediately* provide nuanced context, perspective, meaning and relevance of a kind not often associated with breaking TV news coverage



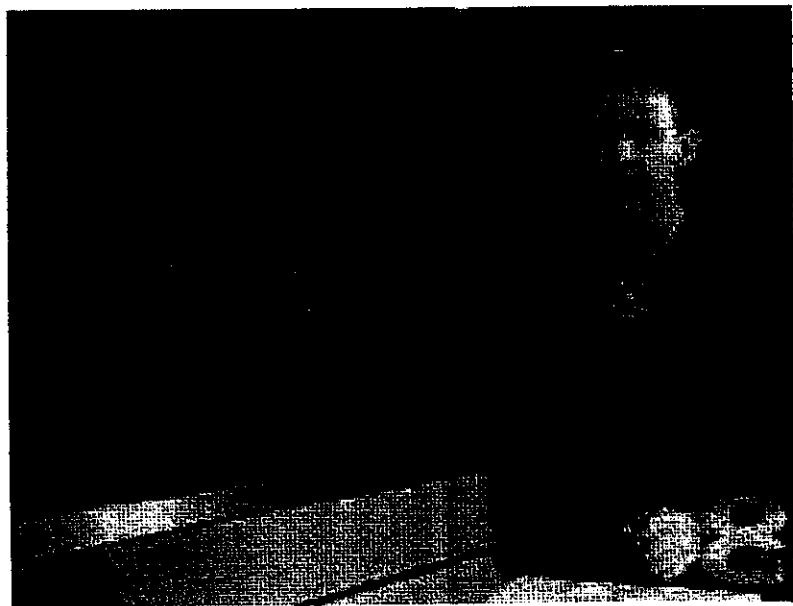
Photography

- Many TV photographers carry still cameras, and vice-versa
- We often “single up” on resources
- *Trib* software can render high-res photographs from video



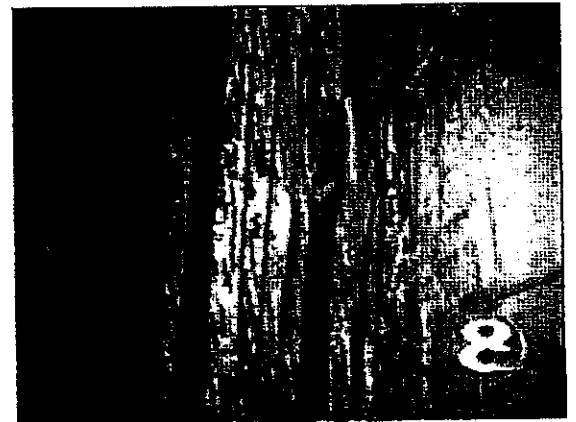
Enterprise Reporting

- Beat reporters share information across platforms about what they're working on
- Through coordinating the publication of enterprise stories we can reach far more people with our journalism



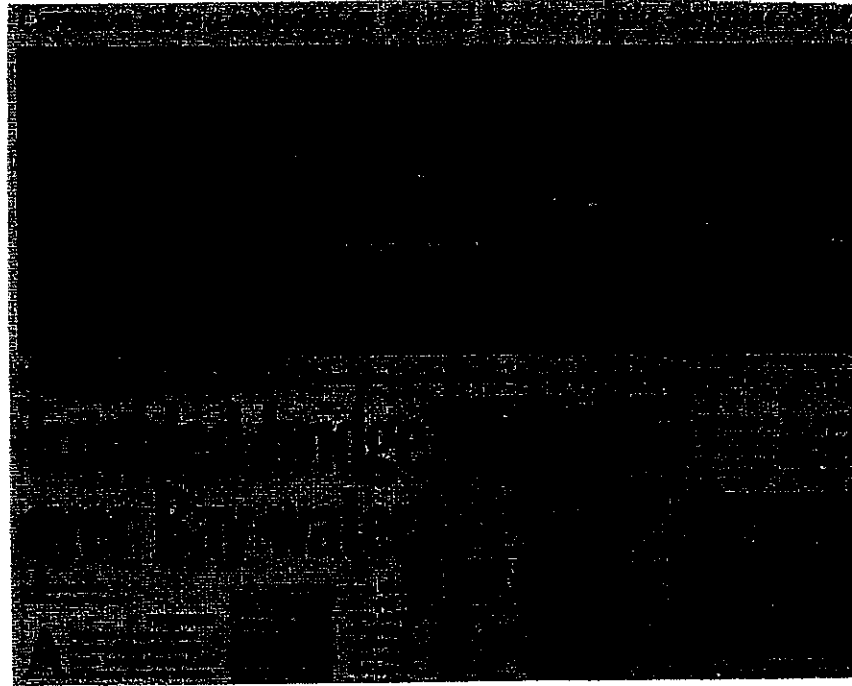
Enterprise Example #1

- The *Tribune* expressed interest in a WFLA-TV story about corrosion on the Sunshine Skyway Bridge
- The WFLA-TV reporter wrote a newspaper version



Enterprise Example #1

- By mutual agreement, the story appeared first in the morning paper under our reporter's byline
- TBO.com put the print version on line
- Talk radio picked up the story, helping to create a buzz in the market



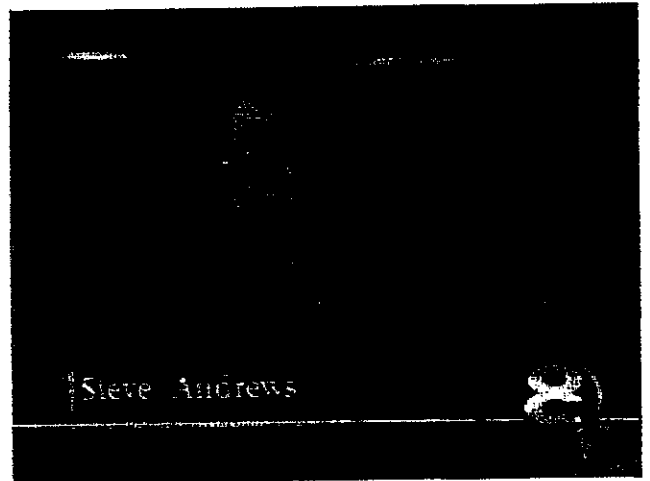
Enterprise Example #1

- By 6:00 PM every TV station had caught up to the story
- But WFLA was #1, with ratings 25% above normal
- Convergence had improved the reach and effectiveness of an important story – and had given that story to citizens when, where and how they wanted it



Enterprise Example #2

- WFLA-TV reporter Steve Andrews investigated computer problems that were putting repeat drunk driving offenders back out on the street



Enterprise Example #2

- *The Tampa Tribune* asked to have the story
- By mutual agreement, the *Trib* published first
- Steve's story appeared in the morning paper with his byline



Enterprise Example #2

- The newspaper version was traditional and straightforward
- It ended with a “refer” or push to the TV version – which as we’ll see was far different in approach

